



Sand Martin Bank, Home Park, Hampton Court Palace

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Sand Martin Bank, Home Park, Hampton Court Palace

Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report

Written by Robin Bashford

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Figure 1 Site Location



Summary

In March 2014 Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks in advance of the construction of a sand martin bank in Home Park, Hampton Court Palace.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the works.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2014 Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks in advance of the construction of a sand martin bank in Home Park, Hampton Court Palace.

1.1.2 The groundworks comprised the excavation of an area measuring approximately 4m x 2m on the western bank of the existing water course, in addition to two wing walls approximately 2m in length (Fig 1 and Lloyd Turner Ltd Drg no HP/09/2013).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is centred on TQ 1738 6806 and lies on the First Terrace drift geology of the River Thames, which overlies London Clay at c 9m OD.

1.3 Historical background

1.3.1 The water course defines the southern limit of the "lower wilderness", a square area of garden at the eastern end of the long water which was planted in the early 18th century and is shown on a plan by Charles Bridgeman dated 1711 (Thurley, 2003, p.240). The planting of the lower wilderness was implemented by Henry Wise, as summarised in the Desk Based Assessment undertaken by OA in 2006 in advance of the Home Park Flower Show:

1.3.2 *"Wise implemented the laying out of a second Parterre at the eastern end of the Longwater to replace the Rushey or Rick Pond as the main feature in this location. Wise proposed to extend the Long Water eastwards ending in a large octagonal basin flanked by two oblong plantations (Plans of 1701 show these proposals PRO WORK 32/3102). Although the basin was never built and the Rick Pond survives, the Parterre was planted between 1701-2 and became known as the Lower Wilderness. It was extensively planted with the framework alone comprising some 8,000 hornbeams, 1000 yews and 4000 laurels forming the rectangular compartments into which further trees and shrubs were planted"*



2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

General

- To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive.
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains.
- To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means.
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.
- To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy.
- To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive.
- To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

Specific Aims and Objectives

2.1.1 The specific aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

- To identify any garden features associated with the Lower Wilderness.

2.2 Methodology

Watching Brief

2.2.1 The watching brief monitored the excavation of the modern overburden within the footprint of the sand martin bank to the top of the natural geology which represented the first archaeological horizon.



3 RESULTS

- 3.1.1 The modern overburden and topsoil were removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to the top of the underlying post-glacial sand which overlies the river gravels and represents the first archaeological horizon.
- 3.1.2 The top of the sand was heavily truncated by bioturbation - in particular tree roots (Plate 1), but no archaeological features were observed. The sand was overlain by a c0.2m thick layer of mid greyish brown sandy silt which probably represented a buried topsoil (Plate 2). To the west of the area, the buried topsoil and natural geology had been truncated by a large modern feature which was filled by a very mixed deposit containing brick rubble and other modern detritus. The fill of this feature was overlain by a 0.06m thick layer of hardcore which had been deposited as bedding for an overlying tarmac surface. The tarmac extended beyond the eastern edge of the modern feature and also partially overlay the buried topsoil. The remainder of the buried topsoil and the tarmac surface were overlain by approximately 0.1m-0.2m of modern topsoil.



4 DISCUSSION

- 4.1.1 It is possible that the root disturbance is associated with the south east corner of the southern parterre planted by Wise in the early 18th century, although this is highly conjectural given that no obvious configuration to the bioturbation was apparent. The origin of the modern feature was also unclear, although the relatively high concentration of brick rubble may indicate that it is demolition material.



APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- OA, 1992 Field work Manual (ed. D.Wilkinson)
- OA, 2006 Hampton Court, Home Park,
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- Thurley, S 2003 *Hampton Court: A Social and Architectural History*,
London: Yale University Press



APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Sand Martin Bank, Home Park, Hampton Court Palace

Site code: HCP116

Grid reference: TQ 1738 6806

Type: Watching Brief

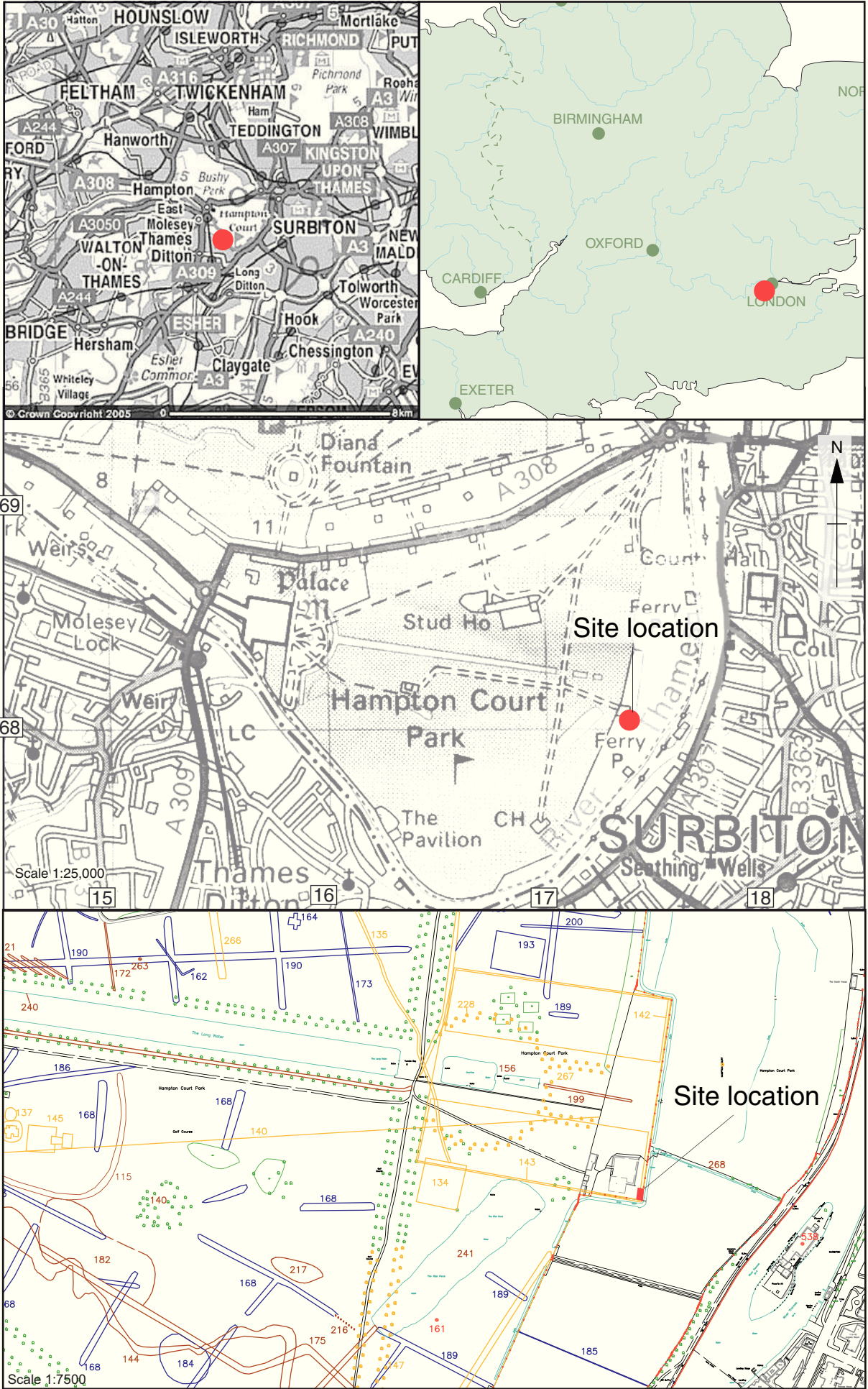
Date and duration: March 2014, 1 day

Summary of results:

In March 2014 Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks in advance of the construction of a sand martin bank in Home Park, Hampton Court Palace.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the works.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with HRP, in due course, under the following accession number: TBC



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Figure 1: Site location



Plate 2



Plate 1



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